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ABSTRACT

Two contentions are argued in this paper: (1) that a democratic multicultural society must have an integrative set of values, together with diversity, to hold together ethnic groups of unequal size and different class composition, since inducement and coercion as binding forces are not as effective in the long run as moral commitment; and (2) that members of both dominant and dominated groups would, in a state that lacks such integration, be insecure in personal identity. References are made to the writings of psychologists and anthropologists dealing with the relationship between identification, personality, and community. (Author/EB)

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Personal Identity in a Multi-Cultural Australia

BARBARA FALK

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Barbara Falk, MA (Melb.), DipEd (Oxon), FACE, retired from the position of Director of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne in 1975 and is now Research Associate in the History Department at that University. From 1976 to 1978 she was a member of the Education Research and Development Committee of the Commonwealth Government. Since the expiry of her term of office she has continued to chair the Multi-cultural Priority Advisory Group of that body and continues as a member of its Dissemination Committee.

Previous contributions to education in Australia include the position of Principal of Mercer House; Chairmanship of the National Seminar for Teacher Educators, the Multi-cultural Society 1974, and the Victorian Chapter of the Australian College of Education; and membership of the Academic Planning Board of Deakin University.

Personal Identity in a Multi-Cultural Australia

Pour your pitcher of wine into the wide river
And where is your wine? There is only the river.

Kath Walker, an Australian part-Aboriginal poetess ('to hell with the white blood. I'm black'[1]) wrote these lines in a poem with the title, 'Assimilation — No!' The next poem in the collection, published in 1966, is 'Integration — Yes' and contains the lines,

Why change our sacred myths for your sacred myths?
No, not assimilation, but integration;
Not submergence but our uplifting.

If we think for a moment about this moving plea and the language and the symbolism in which it is expressed, we realize how far the process of assimilation has already gone; the English language and wine as a symbol of the essence or spirit of a person is not found in Aboriginal culture but in various other religious and literary traditions—for instance, in Judæo-Christian ceremonials. To say what is closest to her heart, Kath Walker reveals how deeply she is imbued with an alien understanding, and that for her culture to be integrated is for it to become 'higher' in some sense.

What does this example contribute to our discussion of personal identity in a multi-cultural Australia? It gives us a focus in the question 'Is the concept of a multi-cultural Australia a paradox or a contradiction?' Can many cultures be integrated without being assimilated into a new composite of them all? Integration has been defined as a process of completion by the adding of parts. In our context, integration means a continuing extension of the society whereby the parts added are linked either by bonds of mutual acceptance or only by laws regulating conflicting sectional interests. This definition poses theoretical and empirical challenges. Disraeli once said that aggregation is rather a dissociating than a uniting principle. If the multi-cultural society (the whole) is amorphous, is it not self-contradictory to designate it a society? And, practically speaking, what norms and what laws and conventions, and what institutions, could regulate conflicting interests, and what would be the consequences for the personal identity of each Australian of such a society?

The multi-cultural Australian society is an ideal, a *gemeinschaft*, not a *gesellschaft* in Tonnies's terms. It suggests a unity greater than that of a

shared territory, a federal constitution and a common legal system. It implies that the bonds that unite must be stronger than the differences that are divisive, and that cohesion is not achieved at the price of dominance of one culture over the others. Such a society differs from a nation state; the former has a flavour of citizen commitment, the latter, not. Committing oneself, being drawn to the idea of oneself as an Australian citizen, has an affective and a cognitive component, and that to which one is committed may be symbolised by a totem, a flag, a national anthem, and a name. The pluralist or poly-ethnic state may lack this dimension. It may be an aggregation of ethnic groups, an ethnic group being 'any group which is distinguished from others by characteristics of national origins, religion or race, or by a combination of them'.[2] The state may maintain an equilibrium between the conflicting interests of these ethnic groups, but some shared concern must mitigate the domination of the most powerful group if a congeries of ethnic groups is to form a society.

I shall argue in this paper that a democratic multi-cultural society must have an integrative set of values, together with diversity, to hold together ethnic groups of unequal size and different class composition, since inducement and coercion as binding forces are not as effective in the long run as is moral commitment.[3] And I shall argue that members of both dominant and dominated groups would, in a state that lacks such integration, be insecure in personal identity.

It is obvious that these two contentions cannot be adequately defended in a short paper. What can be done is to sketch in plain English the issues that must be pursued and the direction in which evidence and argument appear to point.

The argument contains three intertwining strands of thought:

1 The first has already been indicated. It concerns the model or structure of a society that is composed of ethnic groups of unequal size and differing class composition. In such a society, it is contended, citizens must perceive and understand their world in terms common to them all in order to communicate. That is, they must share a 'core universe of meaning taken for granted as such'. A question to be asked is: Can the meaning of a concept or belief be judged by trans-cultural criteria of truth or rationality, or is the very meaning of a concept bound by the sub-culture?

2 The second strand is the empirical one: How does the model apply in the Australian context? What ethnic groups exist? What inter-cultural contacts are already going on? What is the degree of significant difference between the class structures, language and behaviour, social conventions, and physical appearance of the constituent ethnic groups?

3 The third strand considers the individuals who form the ethnic groups. Universes of meaning or interpretations of the world are real only in the minds and hearts of individuals. Educationists among others have argued that to assimilate minority ethnic groups to the dominant ethnic group by education and bylaws regulating conduct is to impinge on individuals in a destructive way—to force them to reinterpret their world and to constrain their choice of their personal identity. It is this third strand that will be our starting point and our focus because, as teachers, we are committed to the development of individuals, and as realists we know that what influence we have is limited by the social forces which fashion us and our pupils.

The philosophical problems in the concept of 'personal identity' have received increased attention in the sixties and seventies. This concept is one of those which 'are permanently and essentially subject to question and revision, in the sense that the criteria of their application are always in dispute (and are recognised to be at all times questionable).'[4] Clarification becomes crucial in times of doubt. As we ask questions about religious belief when faith is at a low ebb, so in amorphous societies mobile rootless persons wonder, 'Who am I?' Their place and being are not self-evident.

It has become fashionable to talk of 'personal identity' rather than 'self' or 'character' or 'individuality', and the term 'ethnic identity' is often used as a synonym for personal identity. This usage blurs an important distinction. To say 'I am a Greek' or 'I am a Victorian' is not to give the same description of me as if I say that I am she who has these memories, who thinks, feels, acts, and believes in such and such a way. My personal identity is an internal model of self-representation, a model of me as 'a unified centre of choice and action, the unit of legal and theological responsibility'.[5] In its current use it is an ethical or moral concept. The key notion is responsibility. When I ask 'Who am I?', the anguish in the search is because I am asking not for a factual description only but for a model or plan of who I ought to be. My search for who I really am is a search for the principles by which my choices are to be made. When Kath Walker chooses to be black, she is finding embodied in a culture principles by which to live. My character can be described in psychological and physiological terms but my personal identity comes from my decision of who I am. Identification with an ethnic group will give me a partial but not a complete bench mark of identification.

It is when this distinction is ignored that an individual may be destroyed as a statistic in an ethnic or class group — the person is lost in the stereotype. To ascribe personal identity to someone is to individuate them as a responsible self.

The philosopher asks, 'Is my knowledge of this self corrigible, verifiable, and if so, in the same way as my knowledge of other selves?' The solipsist argues that self is the only object of real knowledge; Sartre, that 'the ego is neither formally or materially in consciousness — it is outside in the world. It is a being, an existent of the world, like the ego of another'.[6] So that this existentialist's greeting is, 'Good morning. You are well. How am I?' In this way you give your responsibility for defining your state to another.

I cannot argue the philosophic point here. It is, I think, fundamental, and the stance this paper proceeds from is that when I say 'I understand you', the 'I' is not a thing, an object. It is not part of the world, but it is *the boundary* of my world.[7] I can say nothing about loving another as myself or understanding a person different from myself unless I am confident that the 'I' who perceives has continuous existence and can distinguish truth from falsehood in my perceptions of self and others. I have no other tools with which to create and order my world.

Let me enliven the texture of the argument with a trivial example: I am in a tram and a woman enters — to my ear, shouting in a rapid flow of unfamiliar words, gesticulating wildly at a seven-year-old boy. My stomach contracts in sympathy for this hated and attacked child. He appears unperturbed, and placidly points to a half-concealed empty seat at the end

of the car. He was being asked, it seems, if there is a place for his tired mum.

We are not always given such additional behaviour to correct our interpretation of an unfamiliar verbal and physical idiom. I feel a fool. I feel sympathy. I feel a fool. (My psychoanalyst might be able to explain why I responded wrongly — and why I felt so humiliated by making a mistake, but nobody could query that I felt as I did). I interpret other people's states or feelings by observation of their bodily behaviour/sounds/movements/changes of colour etc. I may observe those in myself as accompaniments of my feelings. I know that I have the feelings without having to verify that it is I who have them.

In the event described, I have wrongly ascribed certain feelings to both this woman and her child, and in so doing I have ascribed an identity, an 'I' to each of them. They, like me, have a continuing ego, an ever-changing consciousness of their experience of a peopled world. I verify what I perceive about them by observing, looking, listening—maybe an occasional touching —though I may make mistakes.

Our concept of a person — a continuous body/mind — is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness, that is, consciousness of oneself as a personal identity. When I say 'I feel', the word 'I' refers to something, because 'I' am a person among others. My awareness of myself is social: I know I exist because I observe other persons to exist. I confirm their bodily existence by sight and touch. Their bodies are objects in the world. I infer their feelings and thoughts from their words and expressions. This is not idle speculation. It is fundamental to our problem. I perceive myself as a body/mind, a person, because others are persons to me. It is the sense in which Donne said 'No man is an island', but each in his conscious existence is part of the main. Were there no 'others', there would be no 'me'.

Those of you who are parents or have cared for babies will remember the way in which a little one, beginning to hold a spoon, will not at first distinguish between feeding you and feeding himself. We learn of the boundaries and unity of our body partly in social situations such as these. We also learn of the 'I' who experiences sensations of eating and enjoying, first by becoming aware of the continuity of the others on whom we depend for food and security as they reappear when we need them.

'I learn concepts by applying them to other people and then learn to apply them to myself,' says a contemporary philosopher, Bernard Williams.[8]

We turn now to the psychologists.[9]

Eric Erickson[10] has described this world of other people believing, acting and feeling in their accustomed ways in contact with the growing child. He explains how identity gradually emerges as an 'evolving configuration' through successive stages of growth in which synthesis and resynthesis occur as knowledge and understanding of the world increases. Erickson's account, I think, underestimates the degree to which my concept of myself reflects my knowledge of the accepted laws governing the physical and social world in which I live. We cannot follow him in detail. We can, however, take a point important to our discussion, that it would be difficult to establish a consistent identity for oneself (that is, consistent in the same way) if definitions of oneself by others are inconsistent or mutually exclusive. I will return to this point later. Kath Walker had to make her choice between others who identified her as either black or white. She had

to do so — she felt morally bound and able to choose her personal identity. 'Every act of social affiliation involves a choice of identity.'[11]

Erickson envisages human physical development as always following the same pattern, though rate of development — for example, age of puberty — may vary in different climates and cultures. He sees the need 'to integrate the time-table of the organism with the structure of social institutions' so that there is a fit between what a child anatomically and neurologically can do and what others are telling him he must and ought to do. We need to ask whether this time-table is the same for all ethnic groups in Australia.

The anthropologists — in particular Ruth Benedict — make a different point. She notes the different effect on personality of cultures in which the expectation of the adults of the behaviour and feelings of the young form a continuous whole and those which are discontinuous; that is, at fixed points boys and girls are expected to make abrupt changes to new roles. What similarity is there in this respect between ethnic groups in Australia?

Human beings in all cultures form a personality as they grow through infantile dependency to a measure of autonomy in childhood and some capacity to take the initiative. They achieve cultural skills in the period of relative sexual latency, and in adolescence learn to love as adults and to fit into a social role — and, concludes Erickson rather grimly, 'I am what survives of me'.

What I have done so far is to sketch in broad outline a base from which one can argue that personal identity is an internal moral representation of who I ought to be, formed by participation in a specific ethnic group. I have not discussed genetic or class differences between people within the same ethnic group. The point which I hope has emerged is that identity is (to repeat) 'an evolving configuration of awareness of the roles a person fulfils in relation to others', and of the capacities he/she attributes to himself. I am he or she who is and does. The second point that has been made is of great significance for my theme; that is, it would be difficult to establish a consistent identity for oneself if definitions of oneself by others are inconsistent or mutually exclusive.

It is because we come to our most enduring pictures of ourselves in primary socialization and in our first language that I am maintaining that a strong impulse is needed to link ethnic group loyalty to a concern for the wider community.

Contemporary sociologists divide the life cycle of the individual into periods of primary and secondary socialization, and describe the processes by which 'worlds' — universes of meaning thus created — are maintained. The searchlight is beamed onto the group and the individuals who compose it, while the psychologists' picture has the individual in the foreground enmeshed in his group. Both agree that 'to be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in a certain world' — a symbolic universe shared with significant others, apprehended and produced by language. This symbolic universe provides order for the subjective apprehension of biographical experience; that is, I explain what has happened and is happening to me in the terms I have learned from others. These terms, this language, create my world, and mutual understanding of its language enables me in conversation with others to confirm that my world is 'real'.

Erickson's account of childhood and youth — the period of primary socialization in the sociologists' model — is developed by a concept of secondary socialization or induction into the adult world of work. D. S. Anderson and John Western have shown us how Australian doctors, engineers, and teachers learn the 'in' language and the role appropriate to their profession. The soldier, the miner, the civil servant also have a vocabulary, a world in their work in which a partial self is absorbed. The whole man — the personal identity — includes this partial self. We return to this point when we speak of social class.

In the course of this account, language has emerged as both the most important content and the most important instrument of socialization. With language, and by means of it, various motivational and interpretative schemes are internalized as institutionally defined — wanting to act like a brave little boy, for instance, assumes little boys to be divided into the approved brave and the despised cowardly. Words like 'because' assume a rational explanation for an event in nature or for a reasonable base for a command. Analysis of the vocabulary and grammatical structure of a first language reveals much of the certain world that is embodied in its 'taken for granted reality'.

Thus the very language used in our society structures the world for us. It tells us in our example about the nature of little boys, and little boys become the person that language prescribes for them. In this way the reality of the natural world and the 'natural' forms of human nature and human institutions are learned. This is the sense in which it has been said that man creates and explains himself and his world.[12]

Let us assume that we are convinced by the description of the way in which identity would be formed in a mono-ethnic classless society and ask what happens in a more complex society to the identity of a person who is a citizen. The first aspect to be considered is the relative position of persons in different groups to the valued resources of the society, economic opportunity, well-being, the legal process and political power. Jean Martin has observed that 'wherever differences of ethnic cultures mark sectors of a population off from one another, some degree of inequality between sectors is virtually universal.'[13] Can structures be envisaged which would combine pluralism with equality of access to resources?

Zubryzcki observed in March 1977, referring to migrants arriving in Australia after 1965, that 'sector inequality makes a mockery of cultural pluralism'. Twenty-three per cent of these migrants were living in poverty and one quarter of the breadwinners were holding jobs with lower levels of skill than they used in their country of origin. Add to this the continuing shame of the condition of Aborigines as a group.

The concept, equality of access or equality of opportunity, must be spelled out. D. A. Lloyd Thomas[14] distinguishes between the ideal or limit case of equality of opportunity and a more restricted meaning. The ideal case entails an agreed scale by which the various goods in life could be equated, because each person could not end up with the same combination of power, wealth, and status — even if these were the only goods people could desire. Equality, in the more limited sense, can mean that the state (i.e. all citizens) has a moral obligation to ensure that *some* selected opportunities can be made available to all on a non-competitive basis. But since there are fewer opportunities to do and have some of the good things than there are

aspirants — for example, the economy could not sustain and there would not be work for an unlimited number of doctors — competition appears inevitable. In the context of the pluralist society, access to some non-competitive opportunities and also fair competition between members of different ethnic groups for limited opportunities become the focus of discussion.

Competition can be said to be fair if only characteristics relevant to the utilization of the opportunity are taken into account. Ethnicity, as such, would never be a relevant characteristic; but it could be that members of some ethnic groups did have more of the relevant characteristics than the members of other groups. This situation, if it occurs, could be explained by an earlier unfair advantage of one group having acquired a broad knowledge of the English language, or having a physique not impaired by hunger, or having a view of property or a religious belief which fitted the specification of the opportunity offered, or having been able to buy a better education, or not being impaired by genetic endowment. Thus the apparently fair open competition would be unfair because the outcome was determined by a previous unfairness. (However, if all started with precisely equal qualifications, all competitions would end in all competitors tying, and the problem of too few opportunities for too many aspirants would remain unsolved.) This curious outcome poses no practical threat in our, or any, society, but it casts some light on practices of positive discrimination.

No ethnic group in Australia has been proved by research to have less potential for thought, feeling, or physical endeavour than any other, so that it cannot be expected that an individual member of any group should be ruled out of any competition on the grounds of ethnicity. But one cannot argue that each ethnic group is representative of the country of origin. It may constitute a more or less representative sample; thus one cannot expect there to be equality of outcome from each ethnic group.

Polyethnic societies, to repeat, have always been unjust in the sense of not offering equal opportunity for access to resources to all ethnic groups. The conjunction of class or caste with ethnicity is a familiar one and, if the structure is not completely rigid, the exceptions to the stereotype who acquire money and status can be found. There is a wealth of case material to draw on, reporting in-depth interviews with individuals in minority ethnic groups who, as a class or caste, endure poverty, and surveys to establish the stereotypes which they exemplify. America and the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Latin America, South Africa reveal similar features in the many faces of the disadvantaged.

Australia is one of the countries in which economic growth and demographic growth have depended upon immigration. It is said of such countries that 'the relationship between social class and ethnic origin is especially close'.[15] But Zubrzycki reminds us that 'the Australian stratification system is multi-dimensional: occupational, income, and education levels do not coalesce into a general system which fits the traditional definitions of class'.[16] A. F. Davies's essay *Images of Class*, reporting a survey of attitudes to social class among Melbourne adults in late 1962, and Hammond and Oeser's studies lend support to this statement.

This relatively fluid structure is reflected in the geographical distribution of the population. Although there are areas of poverty and of high migrant

density in the major cities, these do not harden into permanent ghettoes. An older wave of Italians moves into suburbia and the Lebanese or the trendies take their place. Many of the inner suburban schools of high migrant density have a mixed and shifting ethnic composition. (The bush, outback, and fringe Aborigines are obvious exceptions.)

To analyse the Australian population structure is to freeze a kaleidoscope. The changing composition of the population is one factor; there are also fluctuations in the various ethnic groups in the country. Lewins[17] adds to the kaleidoscope the notion of 'Ethnicity as process' in an article where he shows how a group of Italian Catholics from diverse regions in Italy, with 'different histories, mentalities and culture', coalesce in order to obtain some measure of political power in a parish, in the face of the hostility and stereotyping by the Anglo-Australian members of that congregation. In this instance 'one should not assume that ethnicity in Australia corresponds to the typical characteristics of the country of origin' — a group has been formed which did not have unity, because there was no enemy, in the home country.

This forming of a new group consciousness can be paralleled by the loosening of consciousness, for example, among the Dutch, whether they be Catholics mainly from the south or Protestants mainly from the north. So our kaleidoscope includes both the formation of new groupings and the dispersal of others — and as well, the hardening of established groups in response to hostility or in search of power to achieve change in living conditions. An Australian-born Italian, designated Cangurone in Lou Soccio's[18] family may in certain circumstances identify herself as an Italian, though she would usually characterize herself an Australian and would be so characterized by the Italians she meets.

The kaleidoscope analogy is inadequate in that it does not allow for the hard core of established groups which remain stable. It portrays but does not analyse the upsurge of ethnic consciousness in Australia in the seventies. Peter Medding offered an analysis in his study of the Melbourne Jewish community entitled 'From assimilation to group survival'.

If each person is thought of as one piece of the 14 million we picture as a kaleidoscope, what does the very fluidity of the society do to each one's being? I said earlier that forming personal identity involves having a specific place in a certain world — a symbolic world ordered by the institutions of a society. In a stable society there is a congruity of subjective and objective worlds. One does not need to ask, 'Who am I?' — always allowing for ex-nuptial and adopted children. Choices are clearly restricted. Significant others have confirmed that I exist. I know myself to be the person defined in my roles by interaction with persons and by the order of society. I am at home — not necessarily happy — in my place of work and in my domesticity. In a fluid or mobile society, particularly in a period of rapid technological, demographic, and social change, people in all groups are no longer so sure in defining themselves. It is not only the recently arrived and the displaced who question, though I shall argue the burden of doubt falls more heavily on the newly arrived, the upwardly and downwardly mobile, the poor, and particularly the Aboriginal poor.

The account so far of the process of developing an identity and the glance at equality of opportunity provide threads of the argument. Some further clarification is needed. You will recall that I spoke of ethnicity as

process, groups forming and partly dissolving, and the changing roles people assumed as they changed place. I noted that the class structure in Australia is not hard-edged but in this country, as in all advanced industrial nations, the economic surplus enables some groups to devote themselves to pursuits that are not directly productive. These groups possess an esoteric knowledge which creates, if you will, a sub-universe of meaning which distinguishes them from others. Lawyers and educational administrators and musicians and trade union executives are set apart by their perspective of the world as, for different reasons, are the chronically unemployed poor, the miners and the Aboriginal Australians. These are the partial universes which were mentioned. The power that esoteric knowledge gives and the high income and social status it engenders do not encompass a person's whole life; but they are highly significant in the development of an identity.

In this sense, as well as in the ethnic sense, Australia is a pluralist society. I have shown that migrants as grouped by occupation, income, and place of residence show too high a percentage unemployed and in unskilled work. They are in a double bind of using a foreign symbolism to express an institutionally different world on entry into the partial universe of the comparatively poor of the dominant group.

Because the Australian class structure is fluid, some talented or fortunate or unscrupulous individuals — or some combination of these — move upward in income and social status. An American study entitled *The Hidden Injuries of Class* gives some evidence from a number of in-depth studies of blue-collar and lower white-collar workers of the effect of the possibility of limited upward social mobility.[19] If some people in my group have gained higher status and richer rewards, then it must be some failure, some weakness of intellect or character that keeps me where I am. If my friend becomes an accountant and I become a salesman in a shoe shop, I must either accept that *I* am inferior or alienate myself from my job. I can say I am worthy of better things but society, the economic system, some external force, an immediate obligation to support my wife and children, keeps me where I am. And if I cannot expect respect for my work status in the external world to earn me respect and admiration in my domestic world, if I need respect there (and do we not?), I may enforce it by domestic discipline, or demand it by virtue of my self-sacrifice in earning for my 'others', who must, in this way, confirm the identity which I have created to hold together my divided self. The 'I' that I know myself to be is not confirmed by my status in society. I need the real me, the hidden quality, to be appreciated by those closest to me.

The persons in the American study were first and second-generation migrants. As in Australia, a new language, the different attitudes and customs to be expressed in it, and lack of recognition of previous qualifications and experience exacerbated the alienation of self and work I have described as a by-product of a mobile society. The price of too few high-status jobs for which all can see themselves as aspirants is either self-denigration or divided self for those who choose to compete and fail in the unequal contest. The fortunate winners will experience their lives as coherent. The doctor can feel his humane self realized in his work and receive respect and reward from society and in his private life. (I am good because others see that I do good.)

In this picture the technologically developed, free-enterprise, industrial

society is not a close-knit single culture. Even if the class structure is fluid, citizens are separated into sub-universes of meaning, and the vocabulary and logical structure of the language used to communicate with others is not uniform. Demographic change — a rapid intake of people of demonstrably different cultural background and language — intensifies differences and brings neglected problems to attention.

In the concern with migrant and refugee ethnic groups, the plight of the Australian Aborigine becomes more obvious. The introduction of perceptible numbers of migrant women into the lowest strata of the work force turns a searchlight on to the general issues of working women. To draw attention to this point is not to minimize the difference between the experience of Anglo-Australians and migrants, nor to conflate English-speaking migrants with those who do not speak English, nor to ignore the colour question. Educational discussion of a multi-cultural Australia always ends in opposition of views about first and second language teaching — and rightly so since, as I said earlier, the symbolic universe — my world — is created and communicated by language, and it is largely through language that others confirm for me that my world and my self are real. The educational solution of this problem, central as it is, is not the subject of this paper. All we can now do is to notice that the languages spoken by groups of people coming into the country differ in the degree to which the culture they incorporate is foreign to Australia, and that high-culture language and dialect further complicate the issue. The heavy extra burden of foreign language is crucial.

A multi-cultural society was distinguished from a nation-state. In the former, it was said, not force but bonds stronger than the issues that divide must unite, and these cannot be forged while there is sector inequality between the groups in access to resources, economic opportunity, the legal process, and political power. As well as language — moral codes, religious beliefs, social conventions, and colour, if institutionalized in ethnic group organizations and maintained by ethnic schools, underline separateness.

It can be argued in terms of classical liberal theory that this form of separateness can be accommodated if the exercise of ethnic codes places no restraint on the liberties of others to live by their codes. Where there is a clash (for example in the right of parents to discipline their children more severely than is allowable by Australian law) the code of the dominant group must prevail. Values set limits to the range of norms which can co-exist, which are compatible. There is a theoretical difficulty in reconciling the liberal state which, as it were, holds the ring, with minimal intervention with a welfare-state concept of positive discrimination in favour of groups disadvantaged by ethnic origin. But suppose that we allow this point and are not deflected from our central consideration of the consequences for personal identity of finding oneself in one of the less powerful ethnic groups.

There is enough research material, and many of you will have empirical evidence of the fundamental effect on the developing child of living in two worlds, one of them stigmatized as inferior.[20] Examples are the different languages, discipline, and content of hidden and formal curricula in Australian state schools and ethnic schools — the Italian girl who switched worlds at a fixed spot in her journey from school to home, where she changed into the person expected at home. There is a too-frequent

mistaking of ignorance of language and custom for stupidity. A Mahommedan Lebanese boy was excluded from playground games teams even when the side was one man short. This playground boy was not the same he who was loved and admired in his ethnic setting. There is no time to fill out this picture, nor to add to it descriptions of the problems of various groups into endless generations — for Aborigines, Chinese, orthodox Jews, and all distinguishable on sight by dress, complexion, or bodily conformation 'until all the world is blind'. And if all were blind, we would imagine all were like me. It is the acceptance of physical difference which is the problem, not insistence on similarity.

It is not only the personal identity of each member of minority groups that is in danger in a poly-ethnic society. Foreigners pose a threat to the self-image of a member of the dominant group. If different languages and customs can communicate to me that there are beliefs and institutionalized relationships different from those I have taken for granted, I must either intuitively reject them as wrong, or open my mind and heart to doubt the inevitability of my 'universe of meaning'. Re-socialization of the dominant group is demanded by multi-culturalism, and this demand may shake the very foundations of primary socialization. A new me, a new identity must grow, and it may not be consistent with my previous self. Berger and Luckman describe religious or ideological conversion as creating such a crisis of personal identity.

And so I believe we return to our original question: Is the concept of a multi-cultural Australia a paradox or a contradiction? What are the principles from which citizens must choose to form their personal identity?

I have used a very broad brush to give a rough sketch of the issues raised by posing these questions. I have indicated that our knowledge of ourselves, our personal identity grows in a network of significant others, institutionalized in a society and communicated in a common language. I have mentioned the forces that isolate groups from one another and the economic and social situations that alienate us from ourselves until we do not know that we are whole persons. I have mentioned the rejection of those who are different, and the drawing together of the rejected in self-defence, and the importance both of one's mother tongue and of a common language.

How, then, could a multi-cultural society come into being in this Australia? We have noted some features such as a society would have: equality of access for all ethnic groups to economic opportunity, well-being, the legal process, and political power. But do all Anglo-Australians have this equality of access? Are we saying only that the disadvantage of ethnic groups should not be proportionately greater than that of Anglo-Australians as a group, taking into account the class structure of each group?

For economic opportunity and equality before the law and well-being, language and education are necessary if not sufficient conditions, but to say this is banal and unsatisfactory. What language and what education?

Our common humanity does not consist in the capacity to communicate, but the necessity to do so, and in possession of the facility to operate with the symbols through which to communicate.[21]

New curricula would be needed for schools in a multi-cultural Australia which would confirm the values of diverse cultures and denigrate none,

so that there could be continuity in synthesis and resynthesis of the identities of pupils; but there must be shared values expressed in a 'stable symbolic canopy' for the whole society.

Is this a paradox or a contradiction? Does it only appear to be impossible or is it logically or practically impossible?

In the light of all that has been said in this paper, an Australian multicultural society could be a possible ideal to strive towards, only if we see the individuals in all ethnic groups, including the dominant group, as capable of both retaining and transcending their ethnicity. If we do not believe this and cannot devise institutions of society to make this belief real, we are pursuing a mirage, and we will all perish in a desert in which we have no wine, no secure personal identity, and no river, no social structure embodying our common values, and no symbolism in which to express a shared reality.

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A History of the Buntine Oration

A bequest to the Australian College of Education made by Bertha Mary Gladys Wilson, Richard Murray Buntine, Martyn Arnold Buntine, and Robert Douglas Buntine in memory of their father, the late Walter Murray Buntine, provides a capital sum for an oration to be given biennially at the Annual Conference of the Australian College of Education.

The first oration was delivered in the Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne at the opening session of the Third Annual Conference of the Australian College of Education on 18 May 1962 by Professor P. H. Karmel of the University of Adelaide.

Walter Murray Buntine was prominent in the development of education in the State of Victoria over a long period during the early years of the present century. He was born in the year 1866 and, after some years at Scotch College, proceeded to the University of Melbourne, where he graduated Master of Arts.

Following some years of private teaching, and the establishment of a private school at Wynstay Road, Armadale, he accepted the Headmastership of Caulfield Grammar School in 1896 and continued there until the end of 1932 when he retired.

From the beginning of his studies at the University of Melbourne, he set before himself an educational career, and took a prominent part in the settlement of many of the problems of his profession.

In pursuit of this objective he visited Britain and Europe on three occasions, where he attended educational conferences, and saw many of the leading educational establishments of his time.

In the years 1935-1938 he was a member of the Melbourne University Council; and he had a seat on the Council of Public Education in Victoria for five years, representing the University. In 1935 he was appointed representative of the Government of Victoria to attend the first International Conference on Education at Geneva with representatives of fifty-two countries.

In 1940, and until the end of the Second World War, he gave his services continuously as a voluntary communications Censor in the 3rd Military District.

During his time at Caulfield Grammar School he was partly responsible for the formation of the Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria, over which he presided during three terms of office, and its excellent training institute for teachers. Other positions which he filled at the University of Melbourne were: Membership of the Standing Committee of Convocation, the Faculty of Arts, and the Schools Board, and Life Membership of the Graduates Association. He was for many years a Life Governor of the British and Foreign Bible Society, London, and a member of its Commonwealth Council. He was also the first president and for many years president of the Church Missionary Society in Victoria.